

## **2006 TIP REPORT: BANGLADESH CONTINUTES TO MAKE PROGRESS TO ELIMINATE HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**DHAKA, JUNE 6, 2006** -- On June 5, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice released the 2006 Trafficking in Persons Report. The goal of this report is to stimulate action and create partnerships around the world in the fight against modern-day slavery. The entire report is available on-line at [www.state.gov/g/tip](http://www.state.gov/g/tip). In 2006, Bangladesh continues to be classified as a “Tier Two” country. This means that although Bangladesh is not judged to meet minimum standards for the elimination of severe forms of trafficking, it continues to make progress to meet those minimum standards. The section of the report describing the situation in Bangladesh is included below:

Bangladesh is a source and transit country for men, women, and children for the purposes of sexual exploitation, involuntary domestic servitude, child camel jockeying, and debt bondage. Women and children from Bangladesh are trafficked to India and Pakistan for sexual exploitation. Bangladeshi women migrate legally to Gulf states—Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, the U.A.E., and Saudi Arabia—for work as domestic servants, but often find themselves in situations of involuntary servitude. In addition, Bangladeshi boys are trafficked to the Gulf to serve as camel jockeys and internally as bonded laborers in the fishing industry. Women and girls from rural areas are trafficked internally for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude. Burmese women trafficked to India for sexual exploitation transit Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Bangladesh continued to make progress on efforts

initiated two years ago. The government repatriated 166 child camel jockeys from the U.A.E., rescued 160 children from bonded labor in the fishing industry, launched a broad public awareness campaign, and provided anti-trafficking training to border guards and diplomats. Despite these achievements, Bangladesh continues to face a significant internal and international trafficking problem. Bangladesh should assign greater priority and resources to its law enforcement response to trafficking. It should also institute programs to protect witnesses.

### ***Prosecution***

The Government of Bangladesh sustained efforts to punish traffickers in 2005, prosecuting 87 cases and convicting 36 traffickers – 27 of whom received life sentences. Although the number of prosecutions increased over 2004, the number of convictions declined. Police also arrested 150 alleged traffickers. Notably, Bangladesh began prosecutions against child camel jockey traffickers. Although a lack of resources hinders investigations, Bangladesh expanded anti-trafficking police units to every district to encourage victims to testify against their traffickers and to compile data on trafficking. In response to inadequately trained police and prosecutors, the government worked with legal experts to provide specialized training to prosecutors and with IOM to develop a trafficking course for the National Police Academy. Despite persistent reports of security personnel complicity in trafficking, the government has investigated only three such cases since June 2004, charging eight officials with trafficking complicity.

### ***Protection***

The Government of Bangladesh continued to provide an inadequate level of protection to victims of trafficking over the reporting period. With limited resources, the government supported crisis centers in hospitals that are open to trafficking victims, but it also relied heavily on NGOs to provide legal, medical, and psychological care to victims. Of the 166 child camel jockeys repatriated from the U.A.E., 144 have returned to their families, 16 are preparing for reunification, and authorities are searching for relatives of

the remaining six. Bangladesh should institute a system to protect witnesses from retribution and to encourage more to testify at trials against traffickers.

### ***Prevention***

Bangladesh made significant progress in its trafficking prevention efforts throughout the year through broad public awareness campaigns and specialized training. A campaign of public service announcements aired 3,152 television spots and 305 radio announcements warning the public of the dangers of trafficking. The Ministry of Social Welfare also provided anti-trafficking information to micro-credit borrowers, reaching over 400,000 at-risk women. Bangladesh noticeably improved its training efforts, providing entry-level diplomats and over 20,000 border guards with specialized anti-trafficking training. Over 2,100 imams received training on the risks, threats, and modalities of trafficking and 100 imams received training as trainers. As a result, 2,667 imams delivered specific anti-trafficking messages during Friday prayer services in 2005, reaching millions of people.

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*Note: A Bangla translation of this article is also available from the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section (Tel: 8813440-4, Fax: 9881677; e-mail: [DhakaPA@state.gov](mailto:DhakaPA@state.gov); Website: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>*